



Entomology Insect Information Series

Providing Leadership in Environmental Entomology

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TERMITES OF SOUTH CAROLINA

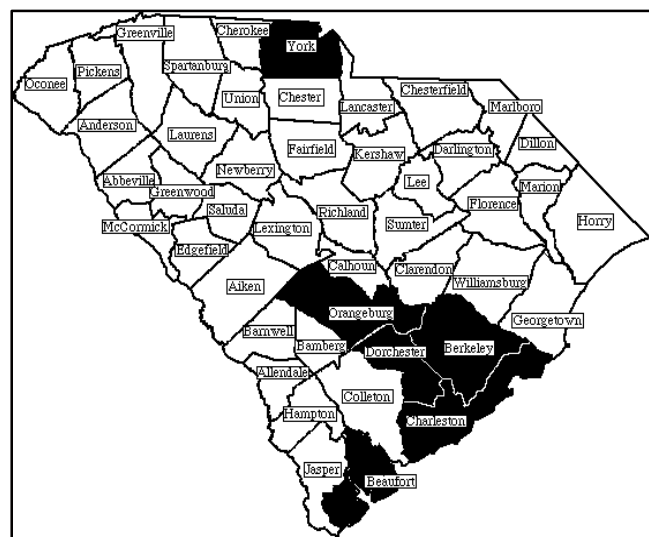
This fact sheet summarizes a 1998-1999 research project to establish a complete survey of the termites in South Carolina. It is important to understand that the absence of termite species from a county does not mean the termites are not there or will never become established in a particular area. However, this faunal survey was extensive and provides a good picture of the current distribution of termites in South Carolina.

The distribution of termite species was determined using four survey methods including: (1) a mail survey of pest control firms throughout the state; (2) New Jersey light trap collections; (3) field collections; and (4) a review of the Clemson University Extension records.

Eight species of termites were recorded, including one new state record of the **western drywood termite** (*Incisitermes minor*), collected from a couch in Greenville County. This species is beginning to establish itself in some southeastern states. The remaining seven include four subterranean termite species and three drywood termite species.

Native subterranean termites, including the eastern subterranean termite (*Reticulitermes flavipes*) and the southeastern subterranean termite (*Reticulitermes virginicus*) are the two most commonly encountered species and are found throughout the state. These two species are very similar in appearance and can only be distinguished with the help of a microscope. The third native subterranean species, named the light southeastern subterranean termite (*Reticulitermes hageni*), is also very similar to the previous two but is not commonly encountered. This species is only recorded in six counties. It is difficult to identify the winged form (swarmer) of the light southeastern subterranean termite because it looks similar to drywood termite swarmers. Because of this, it is often misidentified and is probably more widespread than indicated.

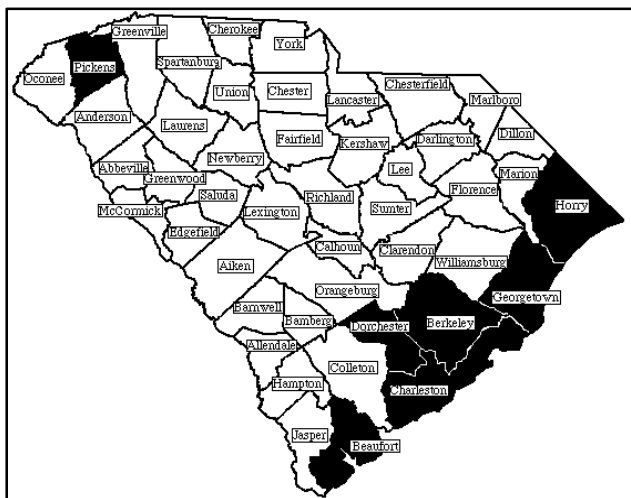
The **Formosan subterranean termite** (*Coptotermes formosanus*) has spread since its introduction into S.C. It is established in many areas of Charleston County and has moved to Hilton Head Island in Beaufort County and the city of Orangeburg in Orangeburg County. These infestations are theorized to have established through the transport of infested lumber brought in from Formosan subterranean termite infested areas. Records of Formosan subterranean termites also have been found in two areas in Dorchester County and one in Berkeley County. These too are attributed to infested lumber brought into these areas. Formosan subterranean termites also were collected from the town of Burton, which indicates they have moved inland in Beaufort County. Most recently, Formosan subterranean termites were collected in the City of Rock Hill in York County.



Black areas indicate South Carolina counties where Formosan subterranean termites have been documented.

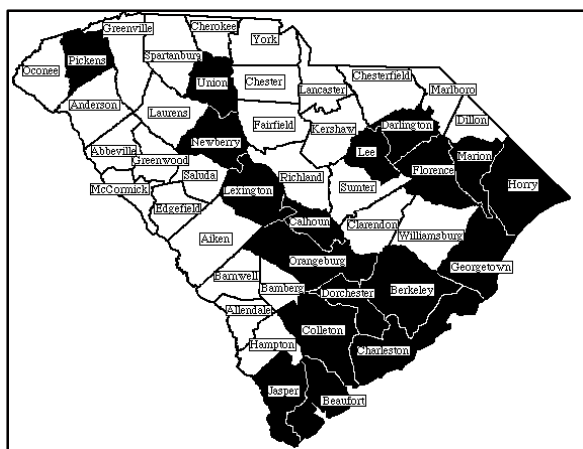
The **powderpost termite** (*Cryptotermes brevis*), is now recorded in seven counties in S.C. These counties include Pickens, Anderson, Spartanburg, Union, Greenwood, Charleston and Beaufort. This species has never been recorded in natural habitats in S.C. and only occasionally in structures.

The **eastern drywood termite** (*Incisitermes snyderi*), was found in six counties in the coastal region of S.C. There is one record of this species in Pickens County indicating it is not restricted to the coast. All samples on record from S.C. were taken from structures or light traps.



Black areas indicate South Carolina counties where eastern drywood termites have been documented.

Kaloterms approximatus is a drywood species collected from natural habitats in 18 counties in S.C. It does not have a common name. This species is not a major pest, but does occasionally infest structures. Most specimens on record were collected from live or dead hardwood trees.



Black areas indicate South Carolina counties where the drywood termite, *Kaloterms approximatus* has been documented.

It is important to be familiar with the termite species in an area. This can help pest management professionals develop better management programs and alert homeowners where different types of termites are known to occur. This information also helps Extension and Regulatory personnel recognize and potentially stop a new pest species that may try to establish in an area, and to keep a current catalogue for future research possibilities.

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